

# Covid compensation: Supreme Court fixes timelines for filing claims

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- Covid-19: The apex court said that the National Disaster Management Authority should be conducting the exercise of determining the extent of fake ex-gratia COVID-19 compensation claims, since it has been vested with powers under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The Centre today said that the Supreme Court, in an order dated March 24, had fixed timelines to file the claims for the compensation of Covid-19 deaths. According to the order, for deaths that occurred prior to 20 March, the claims have to be filed within 60 days, while for any future deaths, 90 days' time has been given to file for the ex gratia.

Earlier, the Supreme Court last month said the deadline of four weeks, as suggested by the Centre for claiming ex gratia payment from authorities on the death of kin due to COVID-19, may not be sufficient as the families of the deceased would be distressed due to the loss of family members.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and B V Nagarathna indicated that a period of 60 days would be given to all such persons who are eligible as on date to apply for the ex-gratia compensation and 90 days shall be given to the future claimants.

"It (four weeks) may not be an appropriate time period, as the family concerned may be in shock and four weeks may not be a good time. If there is a death, then the family would need time to recover from the sorrow and then file claims," the bench observed.

The apex court said that the National Disaster Management Authority should be conducting the exercise of determining the extent of fake ex-gratia COVID-19 compensation claims, since it has been vested with powers under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

With regard to the Centre's plea seeking sample survey for verification of fake claims, the bench said it may focus on two- three states where registered deaths and claims have a difference.

At the outset, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, suggested fixing a deadline of four weeks to claim the ex gratia payment from authorities on the death of kin due to COVID-19.